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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/988,777	11/20/2001	Pertti Tormala	2880/351	9117
23838	7590	04/05/2006	EXAMINER	
KENYON & KENYON LLP 1500 K STREET N.W. SUITE 700 WASHINGTON, DC 20005			IZQUIERDO, DAVID A	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3738	

DATE MAILED: 04/05/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/988,777

Applicant(s)

TORMALA ET AL.

Examiner

David A. Izquierdo

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 18 January 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-21 and 23-39 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 12-21 and 33-37 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-11, 23-32, 38 and 39 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

REQUEST FOR CONTINUED EXAMINATION

1. The request filed on January 18th, 2006 for a Request for Continued Examination (RCE) under 37 CFR 1.114 based on parent Application No. 09/988,777 is acceptable and a RCE has been established. An action on the RCE follows.

Response to Amendment

2. Claim 38, previously indicated as withdrawn within the cover sheet of the prior action, was incorrectly labeled. Claim 38 has been examined and stands rejected as stated below.

Response to Arguments

3. Applicant's arguments with respect to claim 1-11, 23-32 and 38-39 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

5. Claims 1-11, 23-32, and 38-39 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Lehto et al (U.S. Patent Number 6,007, 580) as disclosed by Applicant within the Information Disclosure Statement.

Lehto et al discloses a joint fixation system and method of treatment comprising:

- At least one cylindrical, bioabsorbable, polymeric spacer (col. 10, lines 43-67).

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- At least two connectors comprised of autogenous tissue, capable of restricting lateral movement (col. 5, lines 25-30).
- A polymeric spacer having a porosity between 50 μm and 1000 μm (col. 2, lines 53-56).
- A polymeric spacer comprised of a bioabsorbable fabric and a bioabsorbable film which binds with the fabric (col. 3, lines 20-45).
- A bioabsorbable film comprising bioactive agents (col. 5, lines 32-42).
- A bioabsorbable fabric comprised of at least two different compounds with differing degradation rates wherein a coating, comprising a separate degradation rate can be applied (col. 3, lines 20-45).
- A polymeric spacer comprising fibers with a thickness between 1 μm and 300 μm (col. 12, lines 1-3).

Conclusion

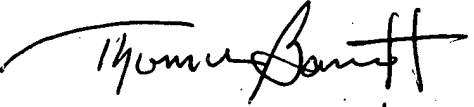
6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to David A. Izquierdo whose telephone number is 571-272-1943. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday from 8:00 am until 4:30 pm.

7. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Corrine McDermott can be reached on 571-272-4754. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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8. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

DAI


Thomas Barrett
Primary Examiner